

The Nabataean School of Painted Fine "Egg-Shell" Ware: Mythology and Concept

Zaid A. Tahseen¹, Mohannad H. Al-Tantawi²

Abstract

The research highlights on one of the most important and unique kind of pottery in the Nabatean civilization known as (pottery of egg shell). The study seeks specifically to prove and confirm the configuration of such art works to be representing a stand-alone school similar to other schools and artistic trends through the manufacture of technology and quality of production in addition to figures of drawings, motifs (decorations), and symbols executed on the surfaces of pottery, which carried Mythological thoughts reflecting the religious and intellectual orientations for the Nabatean society that was strongly influenced by the regional and neighboring civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Nile Valley, Phoenician, North Arabia, Greek, and Roman Civilizations; benefiting it towards creating shapes and symbols of their own.

Keywords: Fine arts, Nabataean pottery, "Egg-Shell" Pottery, Near Eastern Mythology, Nabataean rituals.

Introduction

Eye-catching Nabataean painted pottery "fine ware" (henceforth NPPFW) studies have undergone an enormous and rapid increase since the beginning of the last century. As early as 1908, G. Dalman noted sherds mounds of this type and gave a general description of its floral and geometric motifs (Dalman, 1908: 357). These wares were identified as "typical Nabataean" by George Horsfield and Agnes Conway in 1929 and called it "eggshell" pottery. (Horsfield and Conway, 1930: 386). Intensive archaeological activity all over Nabataean sites has led to much progress in categorizing and understanding the technology, typology, chronology, and chemical composition of NPPFW. These researches focused also on the areas of NPPFW production and spread, and trying to understand the uses of these vessels through the excavations at Nabataean sites such as in Petra, Negev, Sinai and at Hegra (Crowfoot, 1936; Murray and Ellis, 1940; Hammond, 1957, 1959, 1962, 1964, 1973; Parr, 1963, 1965, 1970; Glueck, 1965; Schmitt-Korte, 1970, 1971, 1976; Negev, 1972, 1974, 1986; Negev and Sivan, 1977; Hanneded, 1983; Khairy, 1983; Dentzer, 1985; 'Amr,

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1987, Schmid, 2000, Durand and Gerber, 2014, Tite *et al*, 2018).

The current research is complementary to these efforts as it is a formal assessment of the above studies and theories attempting to shed more light to classify this type of pottery within specific technical and artistic framework standards with many of innovations have been combined which added for this type of pottery its identity, similar to the other artistic trends.

The painted symbols on the NPPFW connected to the Nabataeans mythology, which are based on much of what exists in their surrounding environment.

Besides, others are adapted from the Near East and Mediterranean mythologies, which played main rule to develop the ideas and religious concepts that applied for their own mythology. It is well known that the Nabataeans adapted many symbols on their architecture decorations from other cultures.

At same time, NPPFW gave the inspiration for the Nabataeans neighbors in Jerusalem to imitate it by form and decoration and then called "Pseudo-Nabataean ware" dated to the 1st century A.D (Perlman *et al*, 1986:82).

Summary of the characteristics of NPPFW:

The independent artistic school of NPPFW

First of all, this type of pottery has clarity in identity and style production. Intellectual motives were clearly reflected on the unique technology of fine thickness that reaching such a sophisticated level in industry for specific use in offering gifts and to be easily broke after consumption. Besides, the paintings and the decorations on its surface have systems in the formal structure merged with the function of these dishes (Saheb, 2004: A-B) Secondly, the relationship between the potter (the artist) and the demands on producing dishes for specific purposes as well as being it had short life by breaking right after being used. The artist succeeded to merge aesthetic terms within specific frameworks appropriate with the nature and way of use (Saheb, 2004: B). Thirdly, the pottery object (as a vision and structure): Most of the studies of semiotic shapes and signs are within this sense. There are systems of interacting relationships within these shapes and decorations. This high-quality technology also provides aesthetic appeals to inform the development of this type of art and to lead it to the highest degree of workmanship. That is to say, there is an aesthetic awareness that acts in those expressions. (Saheb, 2004: B). Fourthly, the relationship between the recipient -the person- who sees this type of pottery and these shapes, decorations, and drawings embodied on the surface of these dishes, most of the ideas behind these drawings and decorations were derived from the surrounding environment, which translates the social beliefs (Saheb, 2004: C).

Through studying the NPPFW, we conclude there are several Interference correlation elements between each other's in order to produce NPPFW. It varied between environmental, mythological, artistic and technical factors related the its uses (Table 1).

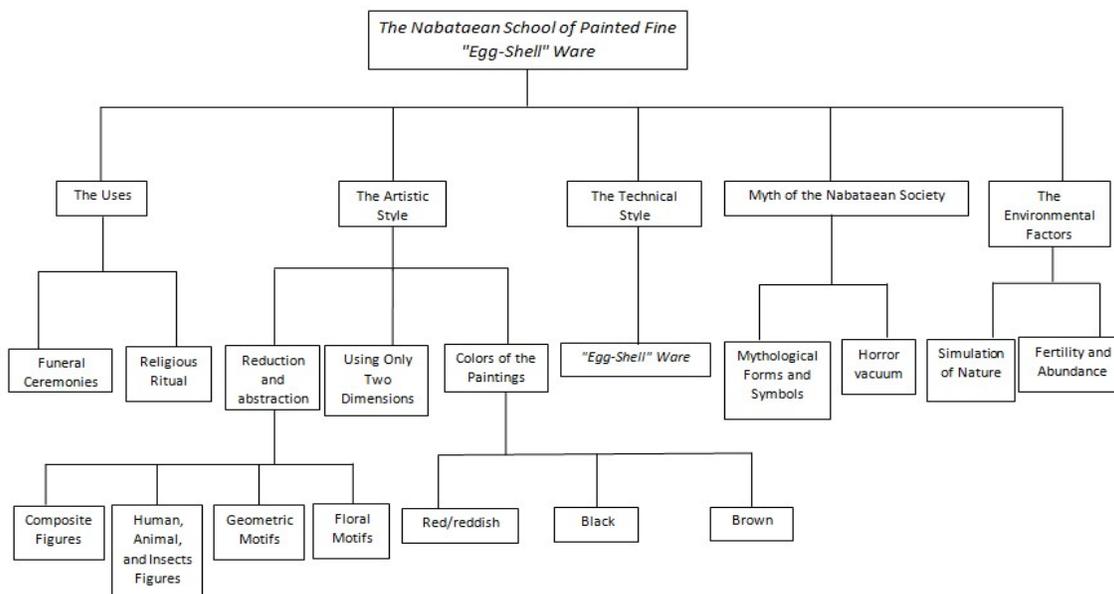


Table 1: The factors to produce the NPPFW "Egg-shell" ware

Summary of the factors to produce the NPPFW:

1- The Environmental Factors

A- Fertility and Abundance: As we know that fertility and abundance are major themes in the iconography of the ancient Mediterranean civilizations and ancient Near East in general. Because the Nabataeans were living in an arid environment, they tried their best to survive and adapt to this environment by collecting the rainfall in dams and cisterns and dug channels in the rocks through the Siq to inner city. This reflects how the cycle of nature played an important role in their lives. Therefore, fertility and abundance were one of their main demands for their food supply.

The Nabataeans worshiped many goddesses related to fertility as Manat (goddess of fate, death and fertility), Allat (goddess of renewal, spring, and fertility). Atargatis, the renewable goddess, symbol of love, and fertility (Al-Fassi 1993: 227, 231, 240). Fertility symbols are depicted on different kinds of Nabataean art, and cult objects, such as carved façades, altars, and on wall paintings in Nabataean chambers, as in little Beidah, and on coins, jewellery and NPPFW.

All of the depicted painted floral elements on NPPFW were found in the Nabataean environment such as *Pistaciapalaestina*, *Juniperusphoenicea*, *Tamarix*, *Retama*, *Willow*, *Daphne*, *Styrax* (Al-Eisawi, 1985: 52-54), Pomegranates, Palmette, grapes were used to express the fertility and abundance in their ritual cults.

B - Simulation of nature:

The Nabataean artists tried to reflect the surrounding nature in his art through these drawings in an abstract and reductionist style, such as plants and animals (Fig.6. a,b).

2- Myth of the Nabataean Society:

A- Horror vacuum:

Horror vacuum or *horror vacui* from Latin (fear of empty space) is the filling of the entire surface of a space or an artwork with artistic designs. The arrangement of the Nabataean drawings suggests an abhorrence of empty space. Signs were repeated to prevent gaps. Arabs pre-Islam believed that the

Jinn (djinn) are dangerous invisible creatures, hidden from human sight and living in the wilderness (El-Zein, 1995:57). The Nabataeans sculpture over 20 Djin blocks which believed to be among the earliest tombs in Petra. These

blocks are situated in places that are believed by the Bedouin to be most potentially inhabited by such spirits (Taylor, 2001:82). Nabataeans were in constant fear of emptiness that is filled full with jinn and evil spirits and demons. Therefore, Nabataean believed that if they filled the dishes with these decorations and drawings that used in ritual ceremonies then the evil spirits, demons could not affect their lives (Mohammed, 2008: 57-61).

B- Mythological Forms and Symbols on NPPFW:

The symbols of the mythological concepts generally dealt with the relative concerns of since ancient times such as birth, Fertility, Death and Rebirth.

- Palm branch (Palmette): (Figs 1-3, 7-8)

Palm trees were considered as religious tree "sacred tree" in ancient Near East, it symbolized sun in the Sumerian period (Ali, 1993: 67). Also for the Assyrians (Giovino, 2007: 5). In ancient Greek, *Phoinix* "date-palm", was also the name of the legendary bird of the Arabian desert, the phoenix, supposed to immolate itself for six hundred years and then rise, from the ashes and rejuvenated, from its funeral pyre to live through another cycle. Derived from *Phoinos* "red with blood", *phoinix* also meant "crimson", the palm gave its name to the land of Phoenicia, or Phoenicia its name to the palm which was grown extensively in Palestine. ("Jericho, the city of palm trees". Old Testament; Deuteronomy 34:3). Besides, in time of Tiberius Augustus (14-38 A.D.) gave the name city of Palmyra which derived from the Latin name *Palma* "Palm tree". (El-Zein, 1995: 23). Consequently, Palm is associated with the myth of fiery rebirth and mysteries of blood (Walker, 1990: 62). And the palm trunk seen in the Ptolemaic Egyptian architecture (Ball, 2000: 385). Among the Romans, palm was traditionally the symbol of victory (Ferguson, 1954: 36). In Judaism, palm is used for Sukkot celebration that Jewish people have been cleared of accusations raised against Romans during the Days of Awe (Frankel and Teutsch, 1992:101), we have noticed that palm tree / palm branch represented on some of the Jewish coinage in the first century A.D. (Rappaport, 2003: 35-38,42, 44-45, 49-54). The Previous parallel cultural examples confirm transition of mythological concepts from main Near Eastern and Mediterranean's cultures to other later cultures as the Nabataean and its neighbors.

In Nabataeans times such a valuable tree, represented one of the main foods of

the people and a tree so essential to the existence of the people, it symbolized by religious thinkers into -a sacred tree, and artists have made a conventional and ornamental thing of it, linked to the Nabataean goddess of abundance "Atargatis" the great mother and fertility goddess of the earth and water, which considered the main Goddess worshipped in Syria (McKenzie *et al*, 2012: Fig.12). In addition, they used Palmette figure in their religious sculptures as can be seen in the temple of Khirbet el- Tannur which have an alter bears the goddess Tyche holding Palmette on her hand, which is indicative of fertility, close to such this presentation was found in the Roman world in the 1st century B.C. depicted on wall paintings and on obsidian vases with influences from Egyptian mythology (Kater- Sibbes and Vermaseren, 1975: 26-27).



Figure 1 NPPFW bowl (Jordan Museum "JMA 2240" © Authors)

- Pomegranates: (Fig.2)

The pomegranate was widely used as a symbolic and decorative motif in the sacred and secular art of various cultures in the ancient Near East, as "fruit of paradise," which provides the abundant demonstration of its appreciation in these cultures (Stover and Mercure, 2007: 1088).

It appears in their mythologies and artifacts since the Fourth Millennium B.C, in Uruk, and Pomegranate representations continued into later centuries, as in Jericho (Hyksos tomb) were found a pomegranate-shaped wooden box with dried remnants of the fruit on the 17th century B.C, and in Ugarit on the 13th century B.C, and also in the Assyrian palace reliefs on ninth to eighth century B.C. In Egyptian Mythology, Pomegranate connected with tombs and temples as the two pomegranate amulets from the Osirian temple inscriptions at Denderah, were a link between Osiris and resurrection (Budge, 1911: 39-40) It was among the offering to the goddess Astarte in Phoenicia associated to Ishtar/Astarte as regards to her chthonian aspects of goddess of wild nature and fertility in the 8th century B.C, then the notion spread throughout Egypt in the Graeco-Roman period pomegranates have symbolically been associated with blood, death, fertility, and

marriage in Greek Mythology (Foley, 1994: 56).

In Nabataean Mythology pomegranates depicted on the coins such as those dated to Malichus I representing the cornucopia which were overflowing with bunches of grapes and other fruits (Meshorer, 1975: 25)

In addition, the Nabataean depicted the pomegranates on their sculptures such as the architecturally decorated stones in the Qasr al-Bint temple and the temenos gate (al-Marahleh and Augé, 2016: 721,732-733)

The brilliant red and yellow of pomegranate skin, the blood-red juice and the abundance of its stuffed up seeds, making the pomegranate suitable

for symbolizing human fertility, and thus life and death (Nigro and Spagnoli, 2018:50-51, 53), the pomegranate combines the diversities of sensory pleasure, earth's seasonal cycles, worldly kingship, and holiness (Abram, 2009: 32).



Figure 2: a) NPPFW bowl (Citadel Museum " J.1471" © Authors)

b) Nabataean "egg-shell" painted bowl (Schmid, 2007: 315)

- **Water:** (Figs 3, 8)

The use of undulating or zigzag lines to represent water is a symbol of some antiquities and is well known to art historians and archeologists. M and W marks that appear on Egyptian and ancient Greek pottery were signs for water, associated fertility (Cerlot, 1971: 364). Although clearly meant to represent the ripples or waves that appear on moving water or other liquids, these wavy lines have an older but not unrelated provenance involving fertility and procreation.

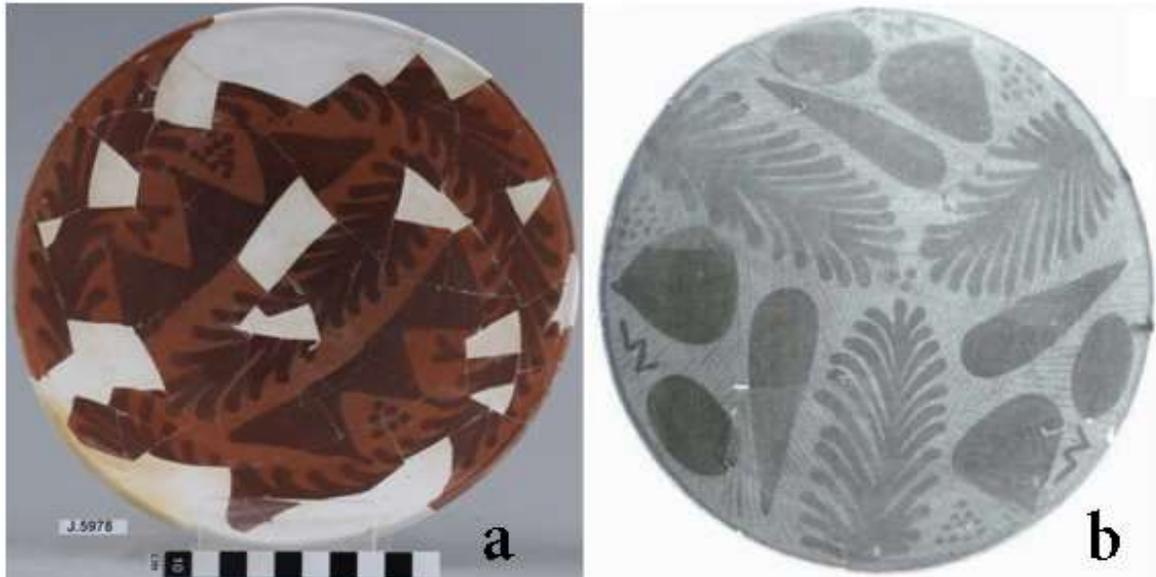


Figure3: a) NPPFW bowl (Citadel Museum " J.5978" © Authors)

b) Nabataean "egg-shell" painted bowl (Schmid, 2007: 318)

- Cypress tree: (Fig. 4)

In Greek and Roman Mythology, the cypress was symbol of gods of the netherworld, the fates and furies. (Hunt, 2016: 242), the ancient Greek and Romans believed the cypress tree was the first tree that the dead would see when they arrived in the underworld. It was a symbol of eternal death because once the cypress tree was cut it would never grow again. Its wood was used for Egyptian mummy cases and coffins and was preferred for Greek heroes because of its proverbial durability, and also because it's not susceptible to attacks of insects.



Figure 4: NPPFW bowl (Citadel Museum " J.400" © Authors)

- Sunflower Rosette motifs: (Fig.5)

Sunflower's rosette turn their heads during the day, revolving slowly on their stalks to face the sun as it travels across the sky. In the Nabataean mythology sunflower is connected to worship of the sun (Dushara "God of the sun"), and they depicted it on the sculpted façades and their religious buildings, such as these on the Qasr al-Bint frieze and decorative stone blocks of the temenos gate (al-Marahleh and Augé, 2016: 733), and on the tomb façades from Hegra (Taylor, 2001: 160), Doric frieze from Qasr al-Bint, Petra (Taylor, 2001: 104). Besides, this floral figure was a decorated symbol in molded Vessel found in tomb in Petra (Tuttle, 2009: 574).

In addition, sunflower rosette were a symbol that widely used in the ancient Mediterranean cultures, that appears in the Greek tholos at Epidaurus (Roux, 1961: Pl.43), and as decorative element for the Roman tombs in Italy and North Africa (Ward-Perkins, 1981: 35, Fig.13).



Figure 5: a) NPPFW bowl (Jordan Museum "JMA 2930" © Authors)

b) NPPFW bowl (Citadel Museum "J.19450" © Authors)

- Bunches of Grapes (Vine Clusters): (Figs 2-3, 5a, 6)

The Nabataeans used the vine clusters in many of their religious arts, in sculpted objects and jewelry as the Corinthian capitals in the treasury façade and great temple and in painted walls as the vine curling at the Siq Bared "Painted House" at Beidah (Twaissi *et al*, 2010: 40; Glueck, 1956: 14) which was dated to the 1st -2nd century A.d.

The curling vine connected to the worship of Dionysus/ Dushara and the Syrian goddess Atargatis represents fertility, plenty, and prosperity. The Nabataeans produced the wine from the grapes, which was important in the

ritual ceremonies by libation practices, besides, the grapes were used as cultic offering (Mājidī, 2012: 60).

- Birds Pecking Grape Vines: (Fig.6)

The iconographic motif of birds pecking grape vines occurs occasionally on Nabataean bowls and wall paintings and architectural decorations; it was well attested in antiquities specially in the classical periods (Harlow and Nosch, 2014: 365).

As it occurred in the 5th century B.C in Greek painted arts as that Pliny the elder's records "Zeuxis also subsequently painted a Child Carrying Grapes, and when birds flew to the fruit..." (Pliny Natural History Vol.9, Book 35:65-68). Other examples were also found in the Greco-Roman world in architectural decorations, pottery, wall paintings, textiles and metal working³. The Vine Grape-Pecking Birds symbolized in classical mythology to Dionysus and symbol of immortality (Harlow and Nosch, 2014: 365).

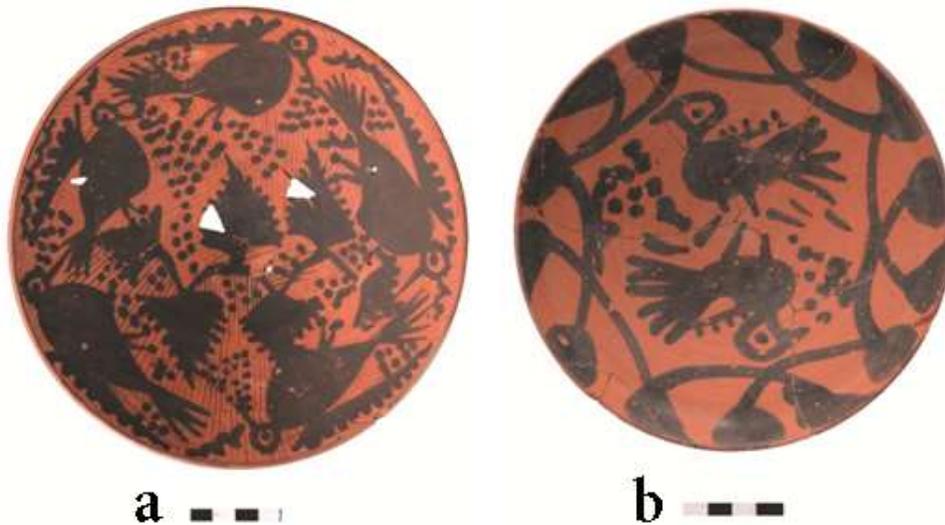


Figure 6: a) Hemispherical bowl with five birds pecking grapes (Khairy, 2013: fig.3)

b) Hemispherical bowl with two birds pecking grapes (Khairy,2013: fig.2)

- Triangles: (Figs 1,3a, 7)

Triangles shapes appear on the pottery vessels in many cultures in the region, and it could be a symbol of the Ash-Sharāh mountains associated with Nabataean God Dushara (Mājidi, 2012: 265). The Nabataean tomb *stelæ* in Khirbet edh-Dharīh were on triangle shapes (Al-Mutawer, 2008: 155), so this shape was connected with death in Nabataean mythology.

³ For further examples see Weber, Thomas 2013 "Vine Grape-Pecking Birds in Nabataean Art", *Studies on Nabataean Culture I*, Publications of the Deanship of Scientific Research, The University of Jordan – Amman.



Figure 7: NPPFW bowl (Citadel Museum "J.5220" © Authors)

- **Star Shape:** (Figs 8, 9)

This shape could be connected to the Goddess Manāt. One of her symbols is the night star, and she considered a death Goddess. And later she was known as Tyche the Fortune Goddess, and protector the city (Mājidī, 1997: 185,189). It was also found on the Nabataean jewelry that may symbolize the planet Venus (Almasri *et al*, 2012:162), which was connected with Ishtar who presided over birth and death in ancient Mesopotamian mythologies (Scott, 2005: 760)



Figure .8 Nabataean Painted Fine-ware bowl (Rahahleh 1993: 115)

- **Three dots:** (Figs 3b, 5a, 8, 9)

The three dots motifs appear a lot on the NPPFW, it was drawn in tiny and bigger sizes. The artist intends to keep this character in many examples within other religious symbols. We suggest that this form could also represent a religious concept for the Nabataeans related for their main trinity gods/ goddess. These gods (Betyls) were found together in cultic niches in many cases in Petra (Wenning, 2010: 274, Fig.4) and Hegra (Raymond, 2008: 133). The three rectangular betyls

associated with worshipping the main desert gods (Dushara-Hubalu-Shia' Al-Qaum) and the desert trinity of the goddess (Al-Uzza- Allat- Manat), and the trinity of the Nabataean Agriculture Gods (Hadad- Qays-Atra'ta) (Mājidī 2012, 44,52), and the composite Nabataean mythology that created association between Dushara and Aarra, Allat of Bostra, and Tyche (Raymond, 2008: 97).

The frequent appearances of this character in NPPFW gave the cultic offering more holiness and blessing by the main Nabataean worshipping gods/goddess.

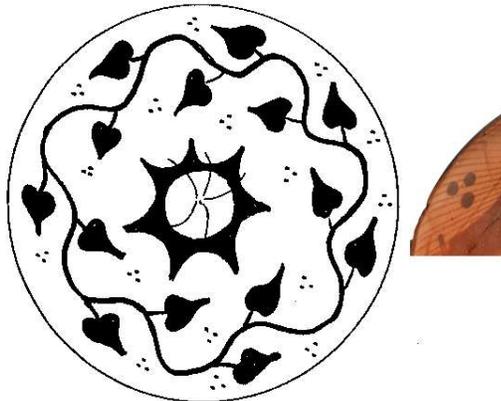


Figure 9: NPPFW bowl (Schmidt-Korte, 1976: Fig. 28)

- **The Centipede:** (Figs 10, 12)

In the Egyptian mythology Sepa  is Centipede-god the protector of the dead body from snake bites (Hart, 2000: 192,340; Budge, 1904: 394), which related to Anubis god of death, mummification, the afterlife, cemeteries, tombs, and the Underworld. He considered the protector of graves and cemeteries. Several epithets attached to his name in Egyptian texts and inscriptions referred to that role, and worshipping Sepa was attested from the Old Kingdom through to the Greco-Roman Period (Kees, 1923: 79-86). Near Kheraha northern of Memphis was a sanctuary known as the “House of Sepa,” which was one of the sites of the interment of Osiris, and the cults of Osiris and of Sepa were very closely intertwined in the region of Kheraha and Heliopolis (Corteggiani, 1979:135-136; Mussies, 1979: 210). The transition of this conception was mainly through the trade routes between Nabataea and Egypt as other else concepts and cults which were found in the Nabataean sites in architecture decorations and other arts and cults.

In addition, we can find Centipede depicted on pottery in Mesopotamian culture (Halaf Period) (Oppenheim, 1933: Pl. LIII).

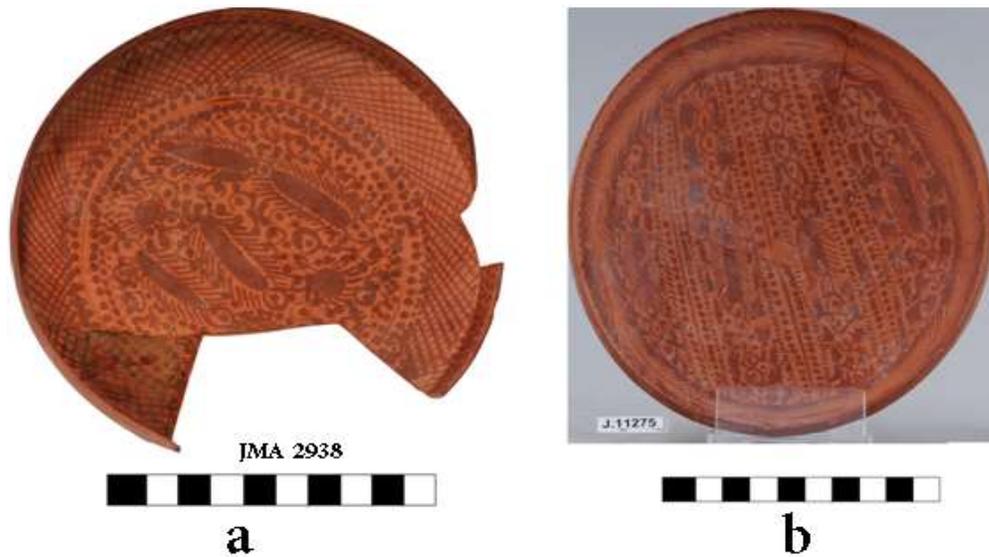


Figure 10: a) NPPFW bowl (Jordan Museum "JMA 2938" ©Authors)

b) NPPFW bowl (Citadel Museum "J.11275" ©Authors)

3- The Technical Style of produced NPPFW:

NPPFW ware was produced from local clay in large quantities throughout the Nabataean Kingdom, but it rarely appears beyond its boundaries (Ajlouni *et al*, 2003: 48). Most NPPFW vessels forms are open bowls with rounded bases, its thickness range between 1-3 mm with metallic hardness. The fabric colors are pink/light red and yellowish-red fabrics. This type was produced by using wheel-made, and the original firing temperature determined it to be 800-850°C ('Amr *et al*, 2006: 2-9).⁴

4- The Artistic Style of NPPFW:

A- Decoration Colors of the NPPFW:

The Decoration motifs that applied on NPPFW were drawing in particular main colors through centuries of producing and it was sometimes polychrome. Between the first half of the first century BC to the first half of the first century AD. The paintings were red in color. Then around the middle-late first century AD. the colors were red and reddish-brown. Around the end of the first and into the second centuries AD. The designs were in brown and black paint ('Amr *et al*, 2006: 3-5). These colors were produced by smashing colored stones that contain many minerals (Hammond, 1957:214).

B- Using only two dimensions:

The embodied drawings of NPPFW are characterized by its two dimensions. The Nabataean artists did not use the third dimension. This may be an attempt to illustrate the shapes in a simplified manner in order to speed the completion of the

⁴ For further readings see also (Parr, P.J. 1978; Dentzer, J.-M. 1985; Zayadine, F. 1986; 'Amr, K. 1987, 1997; Gunneweg, *et al* 1988; Mason. and 'Amr 1990; Schmid, S.G. 1996, 2000)

works, which were to be used widely for the worshipers and in ritual ceremonies. This strategy of the arts allows the artists to create more designs that would be easily added.

C- Reduction and Abstraction:

It is clear that the Nabataean artists exercised considerable freedom in the painted decoration of such bowls (Winnett and Reed, 1964: 55), and they employed these artistic forms and applied it to NPPFW vessels, the embodied drawings consist of plants, animals, human beings (Fig.11) and composite figures (Fig.12).

These drawings reflect the Nabataean beliefs and the relation with their mythology in their own designs. This variation in forms may be due to functional and perhaps intellectual diversity, while these figures kept their original forms. (Huyghe, 1978: 66)



Figure 11: Nabataean painted bowl with a figural scene (Schmid, 1995: Fig.13)

5- The Uses of NPPFW:

A- Religious Ritual:

Many archaeologists and researchers noticed quantities of broken NPPFW in areas the neighboring the Nabataeans Holy Places (Murray and Ellis, 1940: 2); Schmitt-Korte, 1971: 54), and they believed that this destruction was for their beliefs the container (NPPFW) vessels must be broken, it had been used once for a sacred purpose and could not be used again, so it was thrown out of the sacred precincts on the rocks outside (Murray and Ellis, 1940: 2).

Khairy suggests that the composite figure of human and centipede (Fig. 12) could represent worshippers receiving the god's blessing, or may be symbols

aimed at protecting the user(s) of these painted bowls against evil spirits during social and religious ceremonies (Khairy, 2009: 888; Khairy 1987: 179).



Fig.12: NPPFW bowl from Petra, depicted composite figures and floral motifs (Khairy, 2009: 888)

B- Funeral Ceremonies:

Most of the rock cut façades of Petra are mostly related to funerary monuments (Schmid *et al*, 2008: 135). As well, NPPFW was used for funeral ceremonies for the Nabataeans period. Many archaeologists found evidence for their used in the feast meals for the deceased persons, also it was burial grave goods as in Wadi Farasa: (Schmid *et al*, 2008: 151-152, Huguenot *et al*, 2004: 206), North Ridge Tombs, Petra (Perry 2002: 268, Bikai and Perry, 2001: 65-66; Figs. 4,7), Amman (Harding, 1946: 58-62) and other elsewhere in the Nabataean Kingdom.

Conclusions:

According to the above-mentioned few examples dealt with in this study, we conclude that NPPFW carries uniquely Nabataean art characteristics and considers an independent artistic school that includes specific rules in art and technique. Artists and artisans created both free and stylized compositions within their own style.

The Nabataeans were traders and had connections with several cultures in the ancient world, and they were broad in adopting unlimited foreign religions and beliefs, many of their symbols have their counterparts in other cultures or religions. Many of the mythological symbols spread through time and had continued for other cultures and religions.

The tree of life, death, and fertility, regardless of the religion have presented in the Nabataean belief system. Since ancient times, concepts about the natural and supernatural world have been presented in rituals, art, and architecture. Their task

was to maintain the community in the unity and closeness in their ritual ceremonies and funeral customs. Among others, symbols strengthen the sense of national identity and indicate the values important for the Nabataean community.

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Abbreviations

- AASOR Annual of American Schools of Oriental Research
- ADAJ Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan
- AJA American Journal of Archaeology
- ANES Ancient Near Eastern Studies
- BASOR Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
- LEVANT The Journal of the Council for British Research in the Levant
- NEA Near Eastern Archaeology
- PEQ Palestine Exploration Quarterly,
- QDAP The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine
- Qedem Qedem, Monographs of the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- SHAJ Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan

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المدرسة النبطية للفخار الملون الرقيق "قشرة البيض": الميثولوجيا والمفهوم

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ملخص

يسلط البحث الضوء على احد اهم انواع الفخار تفردا في الحضارة النبطية والمسمى بفخار (قشرة البيض)، وتسعى الدراسة بشكل خاص على اثبات وتعزيز مايشكله هذا الاداء الفني ليمثل مدرسة فنية قائمة بذاتها اسوة بالمدارس والاتجاهات الفنية الاخرى من خلال تقنية الصنع ونوعية الانتاج فضلا عن اشكال الرسوم والزخارف والرموز المنفذة على سطوحها، والتي تحمل افكارا ميثولوجية تعكس التوجهات الدينية والفكرية للمجتمع النبطي، والتي تأثرت بالحضارات المحيطة والمجاورة كحضارة بلاد الرافدين وحضارة وادي النيل والحضارة الفينيقية وحضارة شمال الجزيرة العربية والحضارة اليونانية والرومانية والتي افادتهم كثيرا ودفعتهم لانتاج اشكال ورموز خاصة بهم.

الكلمات الدالة: فنون جميلة، الفخار النبطي "فخار قشرة البيض"، ميثولوجيا الشرق الأدنى، طقوس الأنباط.

1 باحث وفنان مستقل، يحمل درجة البكالوريوس في الفنون، جامعة بغداد، ودرجة الماجستير في الآثار من الجامعة الاردنية. 2 مشرف تنقيبات أثرية، كلية الآثار والسياحة، الجامعة الاردنية. حاصل على درجة الماجستير في الآثار من الجامعة الأردنية. تاريخ استلام البحث 2020/9/6م، وتاريخ قبوله للنشر 2020/11/24م.

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